

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
100 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Subject: San Mateo County, Mid-Coastside Facilities Consolidation,  
Project Number C-06-1022

State Clearinghouse Number: 75090824

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT APPRAISAL.

From: Jerry Anders  
To: The Files

As indicated in Section 6.212(a) of the April 14, 1975 Final Regulations (40 CFR Part 6) for the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register, "When an environmental review indicates there will be no significant impact or (when) significant adverse impacts have been eliminated by making changes in the project, the responsible official must prepare a Negative Declaration to allow public review of this decision before it becomes final.... The official shall have an Environmental Impact Appraisal supporting the Negative Declaration available for public review when the Negative Declaration is released...."

After critically evaluating all information submitted for environmental review, I am making the recommendation that an Environmental Impact Statement should not be written under the aforementioned authority. The following is an appraisal supporting my recommendation.

PRESENT ENVIRONMENT

The Sewer Authority Mid-Coastsde (S.A.M.) is a joint powers agency composed of three sanitary agencies along the coastsde in San Mateo County, California, approximately thirty miles south of San Francisco (see attached map). The three agencies are: The El Granada Sanitary District, the Montara Sanitary District and the City of Half Moon Bay. The topography of the region is characterized by relatively flat marine terraces along the coastal shoreline with a backdrop of abrupt and ruggedly steep hillsides, reaching well over a 1000 feet in elevation and forming the backbone of the San Francisco Peninsula. The Mid-Coastsde has the cool California marine climate, the same as other coastal locations, and experiences the normal seasonal variation in rainfall. The Mid-Coastsde service area lies in the San Francisco Air Basin which is a Critical Air Area. The project service area comprises three principal communities: The City of Half Moon Bay to the south, the unincorporated area of El Granada, just north of Half Moon Bay, and the unincorporated community of Montara-Moss Beach, at the north end of the project service area. The current population of these communities is approximately 6,000 for Half Moon Bay, and 3,000 each for Montara and El Granada. The residential population is served by a small commercial district in the City of Half Moon Bay. There is very little industry and the principal land-intensive economic activity on the Mid-Coastsde is agriculture. This includes grazing, truck farming, floriculture and greenhouses. One highly significant activity on the Mid-Coastsde is the recreational day use of the County and State beaches. Most residents of the project service area are permanent residents who commute to San Francisco or the east side of the peninsula to work. Presently, each of the three sewerage agencies

operates its own collection system, treatment plant, and Pacific Ocean outfall. El Granada's treatment facility does not meet federal secondary treatment standards, and both El Granada and Montara discharge sewage effluent <sup>into</sup> near a State designated area of special biological significance, the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. Both Montara and El Granada have been issued a cease and desist order by the San Francisco Bay Region Water Quality Control Board. While the City of Half Moon Bay treatment facility has generally met Federal secondary treatment standards, it is an interim facility with numerous operational problems. The existing ocean outfall located at Half Moon Bay meets the current length and depth standards for ocean outfalls. The City of Half Moon Bay also transports reclaimed water to the Half Moon Bay Golf Course through a 6inch aluminum irrigation line lying at ground surface along easements on private property. Capacities of the existing Pacific Ocean outfalls are: Half Moon Bay, 3.5 MGD; Montara, 1.0 MGD; El Granada, 1.0 MGD. No threatened or endangered species will be affected by the implementation of this project to construct an ocean outfall.

#### THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project will consolidate the treatment and disposal facilities for the three S.A.M. agencies at the existing Half Moon Bay facilities. The consolidation of the treatment portion of this project has been covered in a previous Negative Declaration and supporting Environmental Impact Appraisal. The project discussed in this RIA and the Negative Declaration is the construction of an additional ocean outfall in Half Moon Bay adjacent to the existing outfall and approximately 1,400 feet long. The purpose of the new

outfall will be to dispose of the portion of wastewater effluent discharges from the new consolidated treatment facility attributable to the communities of El Granada and Montara. It will discharge to a relatively flat, sandy bottom area of Half Moon Bay which is subject to vigorous water motion (see attached sketch). The eligible capacity of the proposed new outfall is 3.46 MGD based on the State of California Department of Finance R-O series population projections.

The diffuser will be approximately 300 feet west and 300 feet south of the existing City of Half Moon Bay outfall diffuser. The distance from the extreme low water line to the first diffuser port would be approximately 1300 feet with a minimum discharge depth of 30 feet. The diffuser would be designed to achieve a minimum initial dilution of 100:1 and would be approximately 140 feet long. The location of the proposed diffuser was selected to maintain a separation of the two effluent fields under all except north-easterly current conditions. Since the predominant currents in the Bay are southerly, southwesterly, or northerly during the recreation season and northeasterly currents only occur during stormy periods, the recommended configuration will provide maximum cost-effective protection to the valuable Mid-Coastside beaches and off-shore reef. Also a part of the proposed project is the construction of a 16,000 L.F. reclamation pipeline between the existing Half Moon Bay treatment plant and the Half Moon Bay Golf Course. The proposed reclamation line will be placed in existing right-of-way adjacent to State Route 1.

### PLANNING

The major wastewater management studies that have been conducted such as the San Mateo County Subregional Plan, the Basin Plan, the BASSA Wastewater Management Plan and the studies by ABAG have all selected total consolidation as the most cost-effective wastewater management program for the Mid-Coastside. This project conforms to the above mentioned plans. A Predesign Oceanographic Monitoring program has been conducted by S.A.M. to help determine the proper outfall location. The Predesign Monitoring Program has been reviewed and approved by the Marine Estuarine Technical Committee and the Institute of Marine Resources.

### PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives considered for disposal of the treated wastewater effluent were ocean disposal and land disposal. Land disposal was further divided into the following alternatives: landscape irrigation, agricultural irrigation, recreational-storage lake, groundwater recharge. The mitigation of environmental impacts due to wastewater reclamation by land disposal procedures depends heavily on levels of wastewater treatment. Process failure resulting in inadequate (below secondary) treatment would prevent most reuse alternatives. The maximum economically feasible treatment level under present standards is secondary plus chlorination. This provides the minimum quality for most reclamation users, but care must be used to maintain effluent quality. To allow for treatment plant failures, acceptable alternate disposal methods such as storage or ocean discharge must be available. In addition, alternate sources of water must be available for irrigation users during reclaimed water supply disruptions. These duplications of required facilities

eliminated land disposal as a feasible alternative for disposal. The ocean disposal alternative consisted of individual discharges at Half Moon Bay, Montara Beach and Miramontes Point. Montara Beach was eliminated from consideration as a location for the ocean outfall due to its close proximity to the James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. Miramontes Point was eliminated due to the uncertainties of the construction impact through the biologically sensitive reef area, the potential long-term damage to the nearby biologically sensitive areas and the risk of earthquake damage to the outfall by the Seal Cove Fault. Therefore, for economic and environmental reasons the alternative to consolidate wastewater disposal at the Half Moon Bay location was chosen as the cost-effective solution for disposal with minimal reclamation for irrigation.

#### PRIMARY IMPACTS WITH MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential impacts due to ocean disposal at the Half Moon Bay site include aesthetic problems at the beaches, potential health impacts due to recreational use of the coastal area, disruption of shellfish in the northern Half Moon Bay area, contamination of benthic deposits and benthic organisms, and an induction of algal or dinoflagellate blooms in the confined regions of the Bay. All these factors are likely to be more important north of the proposed outfall because there is greater potential for concentration of sewage effluent. The primary impact is that of aesthetic and health problems at the beach zones and the remaining impacts are insignificant. The primary impact on the waters and beaches of Half Moon Bay will be mitigated by the outfall diffuser being designed for a 100:1 dilution ratio and by chlorine disinfection of the wastewater at the consolidated treatment plant prior to

discharge. Also the combined effects of wind and currents within the confines of Half Moon Bay will cause additional dilution of the discharged wastewater and keep the wastewater field away from the beach zones. The principle, short-term, primary impacts of project construction are noise, disturbance of fish and wildlife, dust, traffic disruption and increased air emissions from mobile sources. These impacts will be caused by construction activity and will be temporary and unavoidable. The primary beneficial impact will be the elimination of sewage effluent discharging to areas of special biological significance.

This project has been field checked by a qualified archeologist and it was his determination that there are no cultural or historical features located in the direct impact zone. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has concurred that there will be no effect on properties included on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register as a result of this project.

If subsurface trenching reveals cultural or historic material, all work in the immediate vicinity of the finds will cease until such time as a qualified archeologist can make recommendations for insuring the integrity of the finds to the SHPO. At that time, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation will be afforded an opportunity to make comment on the effects of this project on the resources in accordance with Section 196 of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended by P.L. 94-422, as set forth in 36 CFR 800.4 of the Council's "Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 CFR Part 800).

SECONDARY IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Secondary impacts of project implementation are those associated with growth and development on the Mid-Coastside namely increased air pollution in the San Francisco air basin and the conversion of prime agricultural land to residential use. The Project may interfere with the efforts to attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in this air basin due to the higher than the average Vehicle Miles Traveled, (VMT) generated by Mid-Coastside residents.

The air quality impacts have been mitigated by commitments on the part of the grantees, and enforced by the grant conditions, to cooperate in the further development of mass transit on the Mid-Coastside and to participate in the development of and implementation of the Air Quality Maintenance Planning effort to be conducted by the California Air Resources Board and the Environmental Management Task Force. The secondary impact of service area growth and the conversion of prime agricultural land to residential use will be mitigated by commitments from the grantees to:

1. Reserve 0.3 MGD of the facility capacity for recreational (non-residential) use only for the next ten years.
2. Not expand their present service area beyond the urbanized Mid-Coastside areas recognized by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).
3. Request that San Mateo County, Local Agency Formation Commission, (LAFCO) perform and complete a sphere of influence and urban service area boundary study.

The above mitigation measures will reduce the permanent population that can be served by the project by 4000 people and will bring the population and service area influence in line with that recommended by ACAB.

COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTION

The irreversibly and irretrievably committed resources are limited to capital, materials, and prime agricultural land due to continued urbanization. The unavoidable impacts are the unmitigated construction impacts, the potential for increased air pollution, and the conversion of prime agricultural land to urban use. The elimination of the discharge of wastewater effluent from the El Granada and Montara wastewater treatment plants to areas of special biological significance and the provisions for higher levels of treatment for the wastewater will enhance the long-term productivity of the near shore waters of the Mid-Coastside area. S.A.M. has applied to the Central California Coastal Zone Commission for the permit to construct the proposed project and is currently awaiting action by that Commission. Persons and agencies consulted during the preparation of the facilities plan are as follows:

PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

Anooshian, Arman, Project Engineer, Resources Engineering & Management,  
South San Francisco.

Burchett, Max, Project Engineer, Trotter-Yoder & Assoc., Walnut Creek.

Ditman, Albert, Chief Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Half Moon Bay  
Sanitary District.

Haliphingstine, William, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Huir, Kenneth, U. S. Geological Survey.

Pierceon, F. Wayne, California State Water Resources Control Board.

Roth, Barry, Jones Tillson Assoc.; City Engineer, Half Moon Bay.

Scholar, Robert, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Strnad, Lee, Central California Coastal Zone Commission.

Walsh, Raymond, California State Water Resources Control Board.

Adrevane, Al, Owner, Daylight Nursery, Half Moon Bay.

Alpers, Mark, Association of Bay Area Governments.

Aicello, Eugene, Financial Consultant, Bank of America, San Francisco.

Ayala, Robert S., University of California, Extension Soil and Water Service,  
letter to R. H. Sciaroni, dated 7/3/74.

Barchas, Mark, San Mateo County Planning Department.

Carlson, Tom, U. S. Soil Service, Half Moon Bay.

Craig, Donald, San Mateo County Planning Department.

Dean, Harry, Chief of Planning and Development, San Mateo County Department  
of Parks and Recreation.

Duhne, Robert, California State Department of Parks and Recreation.

Frazier, H. J., Executive Vice President, Half Moon Bay Properties.

Fruh, Gus, University of Texas, Half Moon Bay Case Study.

Higuchi, Harry, Owner, Bay City Flower Company, Half Moon Bay.

Lewellen, Lee, Land Developer, Half Moon Bay.

Mastenbrook, Clifford, San Mateo County Tax Assessor's Office, Redwood City.

McMahon, Wilson, Co-owner, McMahon & Dahlia Nursery Co., Half Moon Bay.

McJade, James, California State Department of Parks and Recreation.

Miller, Mark, California Coastal Zone Commission, Santa Cruz Office.

Sciaroni, R. H., Farm Advisor, University of California, Agricultural  
Extension Service, Half Moon Bay.

Siegel, Kathy, San Mateo County Planning Department, Redwood City.

Sorensen, Jens, University of California, Half Moon Bay Case Study.

Swanton, Anna Lou, Century 21 Real Estate, Half Moon Bay.

Weir, George, Manager, Nurceryman's Exchange, Half Moon Bay.

Yonemoto, A., Owner, Yonemoto Nurseries, Half Moon Bay.

Canadas, Jack, Manager, Coastsde County Water District.

Berner, Ken, CALTRANS.

McBullen, Craig, CALTRANS.

Neeley, Jack, Department of Economics and Statistics, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Francisco.

Holman, Miley, California State University San Francisco Department of Anthropology.

After an analysis of the short-term uses of the environment and the long-term effects of productivity, the uses of the environment will not be significantly affected by the proposed project. A public hearing was held on September 17, 1975, and all public concerns which related to the growth issue have been have been answered. The applicant's environmental impact assessment satisfactorily addressed all aspects of the project's environmental impact, and the unmitigated adverse impacts are not significant in relationship to the beneficial impacts.

In conclusion, on the basis of the above stated reasons, this Agency has made the determination that the proposed project will not have an adverse impact on the environment, and therefore the need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted.

Concurrence - SWRCB

Project Evaluator

Section Chief

Concurrence - EPA

EPA Team Leader

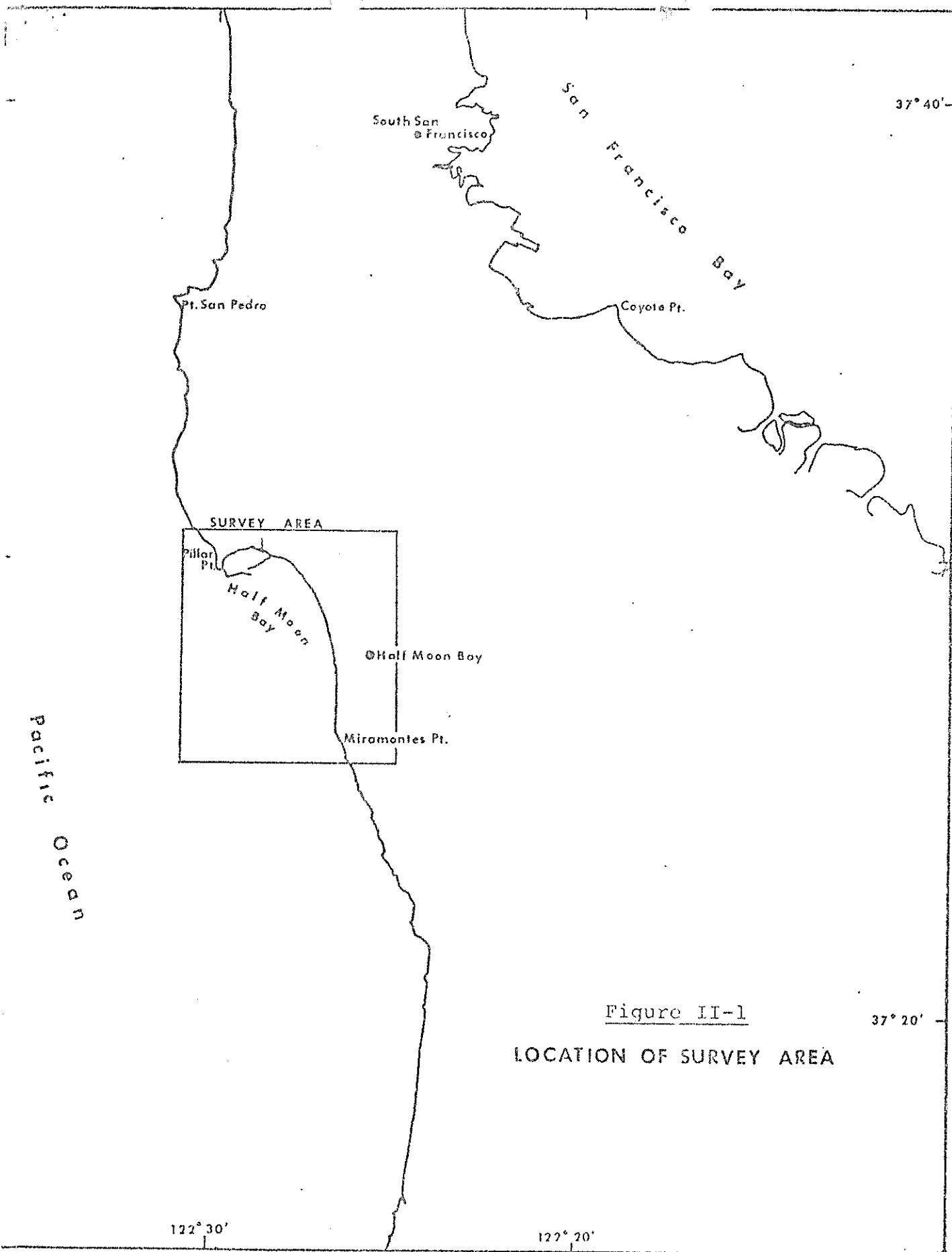
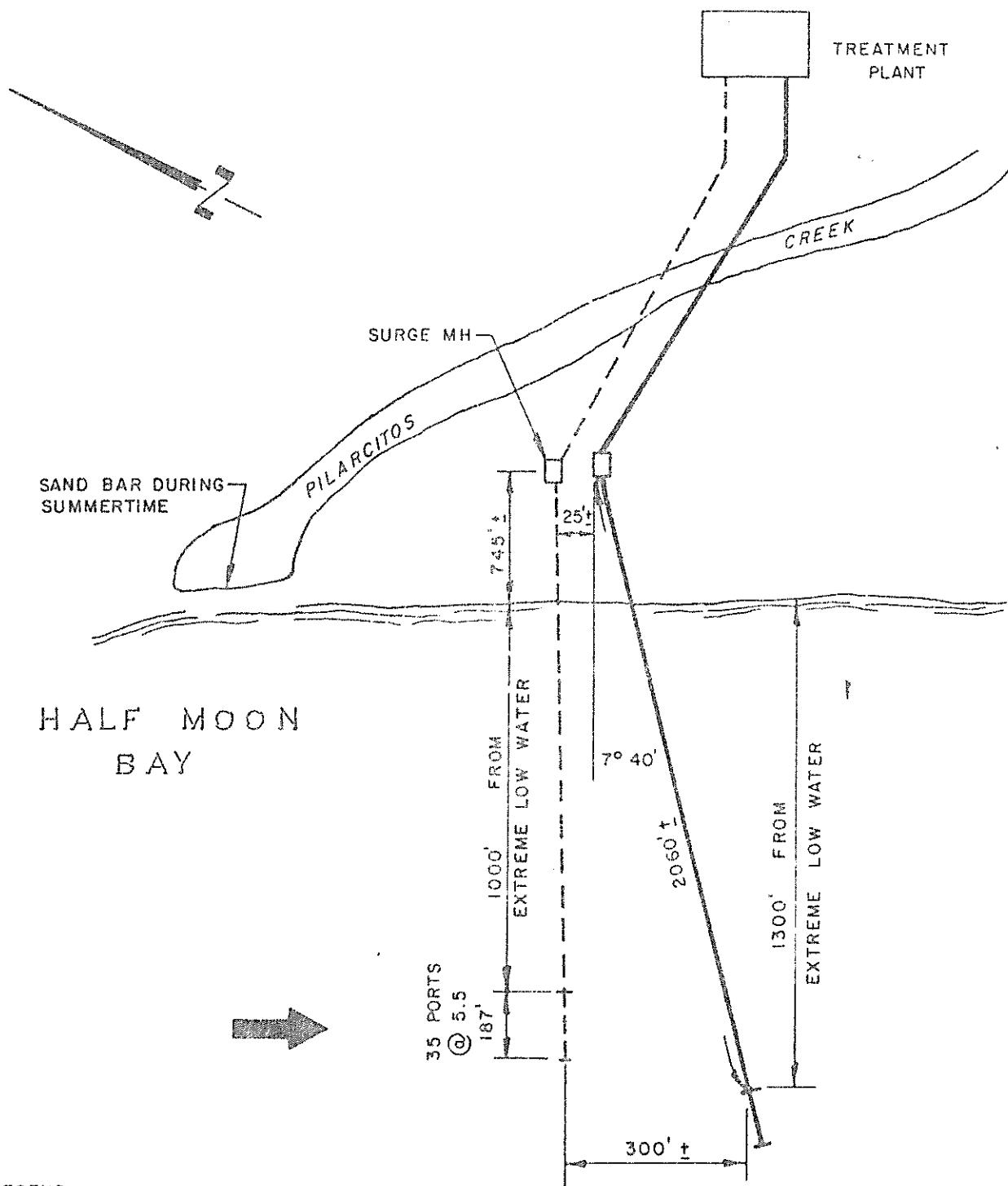


Figure II-1  
LOCATION OF SURVEY AREA

37° 20'

SAN MATEO COUNTY MID-COASTSIDE PROJECT  
PROPOSED REGIONAL OUTFALL TO  
HALF MOON BAY



LEGEND

— Existing Outfall  
— Proposed Outfall

PREDOMINANT CURRENT